REMARKS

The following remarks are believed responsive to the points raised by the Office Action dated December 11, 2006 and discussed during the interview with Examiners McNally and Aftergut on February 22, 2007. Applicant's attorney appreciates the courtesy shown her by the Examiners, and further appreciates their careful consideration of the arguments present during the interview.

At the interview, Applicants' attorney discussed the nature and advantages of the present invention. Reference was made to the specification (e.g., page 11 through page 12, line 3) and the advantage of forming low-density areas adjacent the high-density areas formed proximate the protrusions. Specifically, it was explained that the portions which are not compressed between the protrusions (i.e., the low-density areas) provide an area for dissipation of the compressive and internal forces created in the portions which are compressed proximate the protrusions (i.e., the high-density areas), and that the fusion occurs in the high-density areas.

The disclosures of the cited references were also discussed at the interview. More specifically, it was submitted that none of the cited references, i.e., U.S. Patent Nos. 5,887,402 to Ruggie et al., 5,417,788 to Holt, and 5,858,512, to Dit Picard et al. teach or suggest a method which includes *fusing* first and second wood composite boards by compressing the boards through the application of heat and pressure. It was pointed out that Ruggie merely discloses a method of laminating soft boards to achieve a desired thickness. As is known in the art and as described in the present specification (see e.g., page 4, lines 9-18), laminating soft boards includes utilizing a synthetic adhesive to join the boards and is completely different from fusing boards by reconfiguring the wood fibers and lignin with the application of heat and pressure. Holt is directed to a method of forming compressed regions in a cardboard honeycomb structure and Dit Picard is directed to embossing paper napkins. Not one of the references even mentions fusing wood composite boards through the application of heat and pressure, let alone of fusing the boards proximate a plurality of protrusions.

Examiners McNally and Aftergut agreed that the combination of Ruggie et al., Holt, and Dit Picard fails to disclose or suggest fusing wood composite boards through the application of heat and pressure. The Examiners agreed that if clarifying amendments were

made regarding the formation of high-density and low-density regions, the claims would be allowable.

While it is respectfully submitted that the original claims clearly define the invention, the claims have been amended as discussed at the interview to further clarify that fusing the boards proximate the protrusions creates high-density portions and that adjacent portions which are not compressed between the protrusions are low-density portions.

It is believed this response summarizes all the issues discussed during the interview. In view of the amendment and remarks recited herein, the application is considered in good and proper form for allowance, and the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of the subject application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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